

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-06 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 NIC-01 CU-02

EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 /095 W  
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R 091804Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9280

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, GW, VS

SUBJECT: WEST GERMAN REACTION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN  
SOUTH EAST ASIA

SUMMARY: LEADING WEST GERMAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN  
QUICK TO PUBLICLY STATE THAT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN  
SOUTH EAST ASIA DO NOT WEAKEN WEST GERMAN CONFIDENCE IN  
THE CONTINUED US COMMITMENT TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.  
DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER WENT FURTHER AND LASHED OUT AT  
CRITICS OF THE UNITED STATES, WHO HE SAID WERE RESPON-  
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SIBLE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN AGAINST MILITARY EN-

GAGEMENT IN VIETNAM. EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTH EAST ASIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE FUTURE OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE HAS BEEN MIXED, RANGING FROM PESSIMISM TO CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM. BEHIND THE POSITIVE STATEMENTS BY GERMAN OFFICIALS, WE DETECT A BROAD, GENERAL SENSE OF PUBLIC UNEASINESS ABOUT US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS. COMBINED WITH MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE ATTITUDES OF THE CONGRESS ON FOREIGN POLICY, FEAR THAT US ISOLATIONISM IS GROWING AND CONCERN ABOUT US ECONOMIC HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA HAVE FED AN UNDERCURRENT OF INSECURITY IN GERMANY. END SUMMARY

1. LEADING GERMAN POLITICIANS, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER AND SPD PARTY CHAIRMAN BRANDT, HAVE BEEN QUICK TO PUBLICLY STATE THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA HAVE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED US TIES TO EUROPE OR GERMAN CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE UNITED STATES. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE SITUATION, SAID THAT AT A TIME WHEN AMERICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PRESERVED THE POWER BALANCE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, MANY PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WERE CRITICAL. NOW, PEOPLE WERE BEGINNING TO CRITICIZE THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE IT HAS WITHDRAWN ITS MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN BOTH CASES HE HAD BEEN VERY RELUCTANT TO BE CRITICAL.

2. DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER, IN AN ARTICLE APRIL 5 IN "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG", WENT FURTHER IN DEFENDING THE US THAN ANY OTHER OFFICIAL AND LASHED OUT AGAINST CRITICS OF AMERICAN POLICY. LEBER WROTE: "MANY OF THE CRITICS WHO BRANDED THE AMERICANS AS CRIMINALS FOR TRYING TO STOP THE COMMUNIST FLOW IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE NOW ANXIOUSLY QUESTIONING WHETHER THE UNITED STATES WOULD STAND FIRM WITH ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. THE MISERY FACING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN INDO-CHINA IS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IN AND OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES AGAINST MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN VIETNAM, EVEN IF WASHINGTON CRITICS DID NOT FORESEE AND DESIRE WHAT IS NOW RELENTLESSLY COMING TO A BITTER END."

3. EDITORIAL COMMENT CONCERNING THE CURRENT SITUATION  
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IN SOUTH EAST ASIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE FALLS INTO THREE CATEGORIES: PESSIMISM, UNEASINESS AND CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM. THE CURRENT "SPIEGEL" CARRIES A CRITICAL COVER ARTICLE ENTITLED, "AMERICA LOSES ITS WAR," AND SOME OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE NEWSPAPERS HAVE IMPLIED US BETRAYAL OF AN ALLY, WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND BERLIN. ONE OF THE MORE FAVORABLE EDITORIALS APPEARED IN THE "STUTTGARTER

ZEITUNG" WHICH SAID THAT SINCE THE UNITED STATES HAD  
COMPLIED WITH BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC DEMANDS THAT IT  
SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM INDO-CHINA, IT COULD NOT BE SADDLED  
WITH THE BLAME FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF HAVING DONE SO.  
THE CULPRITS, THE EDITORIAL STATED, ARE CLEARLY THE  
NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THE VIET CONG.

4. ALTHOUGH LEADING GERMAN POLITICIANS WERE QUICK TO  
DISAVOW ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN SOUTH EAST ASIAN DEVELOP-  
MENTS AND THE HEALTH AND VITALITY OF THE ATLANTIC ALLI-  
ANCE, THERE EXISTS IN WEST GERMAN CIRCLES, BEYOND THOSE  
THAT HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE

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PAST, A SENSE OF UNEASINESS AND CONFUSION. THE TRADITIONAL CRITICS, SUCH AS THE SPD YOUTH MOVEMENT (JUSOS), AS EXPECTED, HAVE TAKEN ISSUE WITH LEBER'S ARTICLE, CLAIMING THAT HIS POSITION WAS NOT IN CONFORMITY WITH SPD POLICY THAT HAD BEEN DECIDED AT PREVIOUS NATIONAL CONVENTIONS, AND REPEATED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS ARE ALSO UNEASY. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH POLITI-

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CIANS AND OTHER OPINION LEADERS IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE EXISTS A GROWING FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHERE THE UNITED STATES IS HEADED. THE ATTITUDE OF THE NEW CONGRESS ON AID TO TURKEY AS WELL AS TO SOUTH EAST ASIA IS AN AREA OF CONCERN. ASIDE FROM DECISIONS ABOUT MILITARY AID, OUR CONTACTS (INCLUDING BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES) HAVE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IN ANY COUNTRY CAN PLAY A DOMINANT ROLE IN FOREIGN POLICY. COUPLED WITH CONCERN ABOUT THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE UNITED STATES (ESPECIALLY AS THE US IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT TRADING PARTNER OF THE FRG) AND THE FEAR OF A GROWING ISOLATIONIST TREND AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, GERMANS ARE WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE SECURITY OF THE FRG AND BERLIN. RESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE CONTINUE TO SEE NATO AND THE FRG'S US CONNECTION AS THE FUNDAMENTAL POLICY BASIS. BUT WE DETECT A FEELING OF CONFUSION AND UNCERTAINTY WHICH COULD HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES IN THE LONGER RUN. WITH LEADING GERMAN POLICY MAKERS TAKING ON THE TASK OF REASSURING THE GERMAN PUBLIC OF THE CONTINUED STRENGTH AND PRIORITY OF THE US COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, THERE WILL BE THE EXPECTATION OF CORRESPONDING RESPONSE ON THE US SIDE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
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